

**Dr. Peterson**

**President's Dinner, Celebrating Roll Call**

Saturday, June 14, 2014, Georgia Aquarium

Thank you, Steve (Chaddick). Before I get serious, just let me say that those were some revealing pictures of you and Jim Lientz back during your misspent youth. Occasionally, we might all have bad-hair days now in the 21st century, but some of us had bad-hair decades when we were younger. "It seemed like a good idea at the time" is the phrase that comes to mind. Thankfully, a lot of our contemporaries were having similar delusions of coolness at the same time, so our bad-hair decades weren't as noticeable as they might have been.

Steve, you are right. It has been an outstanding year here at Tech. Before I talk about some of the highlights, I want to share why I answer the call. But before I do that, just let me say that whether you are a new member of the Leadership Circle wearing a Rat Cap tonight, a faithful member of the Golden Givers, or anyone in between, we thank *you* for answering the Call.

I've worked in an academic setting for my entire professional life and have always felt a deep loyalty to every institution where I've worked. But there's something special about Georgia Tech. Our alumni and supporters want to see those who follow them have as much success as they did, and they show that with their generous contributions. I personally give because I see the impact it has on making Georgia Tech one of the world's premier institutions of higher learning.

**After Val's Presentation:**

There are thousands of reasons why alumni answer the Call, and every one of them is important in ensuring that Georgia Tech is strong for years to come. Thanks to your unrestricted financial gifts, we have the resources and flexibility to push for opportunities that wouldn't be possible without the funding that Roll Call provides. That was one reason I came to Georgia Tech, and it's another reason why I answer the Call. Not many of my peers at other universities around the country are as fortunate to have this kind of support from alumni and friends.

Roll Call funds are used in many different ways. We're sometimes asked, "Where does the money go?" Well, it goes for such things as hands-on experiences for students, groundbreaking efforts that can save lives and improve our world, scholarships for exceptional students, world-class instruction and curriculum, student-life programs and initiatives such as those available at the Campus Recreation Center, and the purchase and development of Technology Square, which has transformed Georgia Tech's campus. Those are just a few ways we use Roll Call funds.

Your unrestricted gifts are vital in helping us sustain an environment of excellence. The loyalty of our alumni and friends is truly inspiring. Having almost 33,000 Roll Call donors makes my job so much easier, and in particular, the leadership-level support that you provide is the envy of many other educational institutions. Without your generosity, Georgia Tech would not be the top-flight university it is today. Your ongoing support at this level has been a driving force in making Tech one of the nation's premier research universities.

As I see the first-time donors with a gold Rat Cap on their nametags, I am reminded that in a couple of months, we'll see Rat Caps again, worn by the more than 2,500 freshmen beginning their Georgia Tech education. The next generation of Ramblin' Wrecks will have opportunities to become leaders and innovators, and some of them will change the world. Many of their opportunities will be made possible because of your investment in your alma mater. It is an investment in the future that will bring outstanding returns to the entire Georgia Tech community for years to come. On behalf of all of us at Georgia Tech, thank *you* for answering the Call.